

COL. RAY

Man who sent obscene material to young girls gets 3-year term

By Randy Kenner
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A man who sent obscene letters and pictures of his genitals to at least 16 young girls apologized Monday before a federal judge sentenced him to more time than the law normally allows.

"I know it was sick, disgusting and perverted," Joe Mitchell Littleton told about two dozen parents and victims.

Noting that he has a daughter, Littleton said, "If someone had done that to her, I would have been as . . . hostile as some of you have been. I don't know what caused it. I wasn't brought up that way."

Littleton, 48, of Powell, was sentenced to three years in prison by U.S. District Judge James Jarvis, who took the unusual step of

giving him a longer term than sentencing guidelines call for.

Under the guidelines, Littleton, who pleaded guilty in March to sending obscene material through the mails, faced 15 to 21 months.

His apology wasn't well received by parents of the targeted girls, many of whom were terrified about their daughters' safety for months before Littleton was caught.

Littleton was arrested Oct. 21, 1994, after a long investigation by FBI Agent Jamie K. Sigler. She worked with the victims to track down Littleton, who was using pay phones to make the calls.

Littleton selected his victims from girls whose photographs ran in area newspapers. All of the girls were between 10 and 14.

Three parents made statements for the court, speaking directly to Littleton who was sitting a few feet away.

"I think that's what you're sorry for — that you got caught," one mother told him.

Saying she had never realized she could hate as strongly as she did, she told him, "I would have hurt you if you had come near my daughter."

The father of another girl told Jarvis, "He's going to do it again. You know it, and I know it."

He said if it was up to him, Littleton would be given the choice of a long prison sentence or castration.

Jarvis responded by giving Littleton the enhanced sentence.

"The court is going to apply

an upward departure" Jarvis said. "I didn't fully appreciate all of the pain and suffering these families experienced until I heard from the victims today and read their letters."

Downward departures from the sentencing guidelines occur frequently in cases where a defendant has cooperated with authorities, but upward departures are rare.

Littleton's attorney, Gregory P. Isaacs, argued strongly for a sentence in the guideline range and said that Littleton wanted treatment for his pedophilia. The prison treatment program lasts 12 to 24 months.

Isaacs told Jarvis he had been cast in the role of defending a child sex offender, but that Littleton pleaded guilty to mailing obscene material.

Assistant U.S. Attorney David Folmar countered by arguing that Jarvis could enhance the sentence because of the number of victims, among other things.

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